

House about where their priorities are because that is what budgets are about. They are an expression of people's moral values and their priorities in terms of who should get help in our country.

This measure will not help the people who need it, who are still struggling with the high cost of living, and who don't need to basically have the rug pulled out from under them with a measure like this.

□ 1215

HONORING BELOVED IOWAN DAVE HEATON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the late Dave Heaton, a beloved Iowan, whose passing on February 12 at age 84 has left his wife Carmen; daughter, Mary Elizabeth; the city of Mount Pleasant; and Iowa in mourning.

Dave graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, and he enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve and served with an engineering battalion in Washington, Iowa. He taught social studies and government at Van Buren High School, and he also was an assistant coach for the girls' basketball team and a defensive coach for the football team.

Before public service, Dave and his wife, Carmen, ran the Iris Restaurant for 42 years, and Dave's family in Sigourney, Iowa, ran restaurants as well. The Iris Restaurant was a community hub where he carved roast beef and listened to everyone who entered. Known as the best boss, he made it into southeast Iowa's finest dining spot.

For 24 years, Dave served in the Iowa House of Representatives, where his pragmatic compassion shaped mental health, human services, and education policy. As chair of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, he turned conviction into progress.

His reach extended to education, working with school boards, and inspiring leaders like Jesse Howard. Healthcare in general, but also mental health, were his focus, and later in life he served on the board of directors of the National Alliance of Mental Illness.

He was a giant of a man: mentor, friend and neighbor. Always humble and always selfless, Dave Heaton's legacy of dedication, kindness, and service defines what public life should be. Iowa stands stronger because of him.

Rest in peace, Dave. You will definitely be missed.

HAITIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Puerto Rico (Mr. HERNÁNDEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HERNÁNDEZ. Mr. Speaker, last week, I met with priests and leaders of the Haitian immigrant community in Puerto Rico. I heard their accounts of what has been happening since ICE began its raids. The stories were devastating and demoralizing.

Mr. Speaker, imagine living in Puerto Rico for 40 years, building a life, raising children, and contributing to our economy, and facing the fear of being unfairly deported to a country you barely know, one devastated by violence and disaster.

Mr. Speaker, imagine being a documented resident of Puerto Rico and being placed under arrest, simply because you looked or sounded like an undocumented immigrant.

Mr. Speaker, imagine needing medical care but being too afraid to leave your home and seek help out of fear of being detained and deported.

This is not justice, and as our former Governor, Luis Muñoz Marín, once said: Injustice towards some is injustice towards all.

Beyond the ethical concerns, beyond the moral concerns, and beyond the emotional concerns that these injustices raise, there are practical consequences that I urge the administration to consider. The persecution of documented immigrants hurts our communities, our economy, and our businesses.

Businesses in Puerto Rico and across the United States are suffering because immigrants are too afraid to go to work, seek services, or even buy food. I have heard stories of construction workers who don't show up to work and of local restaurants that have suddenly changed their business model from dining-in to delivery. Barrio Obrero, a Dominican neighborhood in San Juan, is not what it used to be.

We are doing our best to protect immigrants and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect. That is why on January 27 I sent an oversight letter, along with the chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, ADRIANO ESPAILLAT, to demand answers from DHS and ICE on wrongful tactics used by agents that have caused considerable distress within communities in Puerto Rico and across the country. To date, DHS and ICE have not adequately answered our questions.

On January 29, I personally called the Puerto Rico Association of Mayors and asked them to provide as much assistance as legally possible to protect our immigrant communities.

On February 6, I joined Congressman ESPAILLAT in introducing H.R. 1061, which would prevent immigration enforcement at sensitive locations, such as churches and schools, so that migrants can safely visit.

Our message to the immigrant communities in Puerto Rico and the United States is simple: You are not alone, and we will keep fighting for you.

Now for the interests of my constituents, I will repeat my remarks in Spanish.

(Spanish translation of the statement made in English is as follows:)

Señor Presidente, La semana pasada me reuní con sacerdotes y líderes de la comunidad inmigrante haitiana en Puerto Rico. Escuché sus relatos sobre lo que ha estado ocurriendo desde que ICE comenzó sus redadas. Las historias eran devastadoras y desmoralizantes.

Imagine vivir en Puerto Rico por 40 años—construir una vida, criar hijos, contribuir a nuestra economía—y enfrentarse al temor de ser deportado injustamente a un país que apenas conoces, un país devastado por la violencia y los desastres.

Imagina ser un residente documentado de Puerto Rico y ser arrestado—simplemente porque “parecías” o “sonabas” como un inmigrante indocumentado.

Imagina necesitar atención médica, pero tener demasiado miedo de salir de tu hogar y buscarla por temor a ser detenido y deportado.

Esto no es justicia, y como dijo una vez nuestro exgobernador Luis Muñoz Marín, “en la larga historia de los pueblos, lo que es injusto para algunos, es injusto para todos”.

Más allá de las preocupaciones éticas, morales y emocionales que generan estas injusticias, hay consecuencias prácticas que insto a la administración a considerar. La persecución de inmigrantes documentados perjudica nuestra economía, nuestros negocios y nuestras comunidades.

Los negocios en Puerto Rico y en Estados Unidos están sufriendo. Hemos oído historias de trabajadores de la industria de construcción que no llegan a su lugar de trabajo. Hemos oído historias de restaurantes que han tenido que cambiar su modelo de negocio de cenar en el restaurante a hacer entrega.

Los negocios en Puerto Rico, en lugares como Barrio Obrero, se han visto profundamente afectados, y las comunidades no son lo que eran antes.

Estamos haciendo todo lo posible para proteger a los inmigrantes y garantizar que sean tratados con dignidad, con respeto y como seres humanos.

Por eso, el 27 de enero, lideré una carta junto con el presidente del Caucus Hispano del Congreso, Adriano Espaillat, exigiendo respuestas de DHS y de ICE sobre las tácticas erróneas utilizadas por los agentes en estas redadas. Hasta la fecha, no hemos recibido respuestas satisfactorias.

El 29 de enero, llamé personalmente a la Asociación de Alcaldes y les pedí que brindaran toda la asistencia posible, dentro de la legalidad, a nuestras comunidades inmigrantes. Y el 6 de febrero, me uní al congresista Espaillat para presentar el Proyecto de ley con el fin de proteger los lugares sensibles de redadas.

Nuestro mensaje para las comunidades inmigrantes en Puerto Rico y en Estados Unidos es simple: no están solos y seguiremos luchando por ustedes.